

Chapter 2:

Socioeconomic Issues

“The dynamics of capitalism is the postponement of enjoyment to the constantly postponed future.”

Norman O. Brown

“Every day I get up and look through the Forbes list of the richest people in America. If I'm not there, I go to work.”

Robert Orben

Socioeconomic Issues

Did You Know?

- The per capita income for Greene County was \$28,111 for 2001.
- 7.6% of all families in Greene County, or 12.1% of the total population, were living at or below poverty levels in the year 2000.
- The 2000 census reported that 59% of children living in poverty were in female-headed households without a husband present.
- Greene County's unemployment rate for 2002 was 4%.
- 18.4% of the population in Greene County reported having a disability in the year 2000.
- 490 residences in Greene County lacked complete plumbing facilities in the year 2000.
- 5,188 people reported that they commuted from Christian County to Greene County to work in the year 2000.

Socioeconomic Issues

Data concerning the connection between economics and health has shown that people in the lower economic strata usually experience more negative health consequences. Traditionally, families in poverty have less access to routine health care, less nutritious diets, and engage in other lifestyle practices that negatively affect health. Besides poverty, other economic factors are useful in identifying trends in the community that impact health. For instance, increased employment rates for the population may indicate more access to health insurance coverage leading to increased overall community health. Conversely, an increase in unemployment could indicate that some families would lose access to their source of routine, preventative health care.

Income Characteristics

Table 2.1 lists the per capita income for the years 1991, 2000 and 2001 and percent changes from 1991 to 2001 and 2000 to 2001. Greene County has experienced a larger percent increase in per capita income as compared to the state. Per capita income in Greene County was only slightly below the state average in 2001.

Table 2.1

Per Capita Income-Greene County and Missouri, 1991, 2000, and 2001					
	1991	2000	2001	% Change 2000-2001	% Change 1991-2001
Greene	17,745	27,016	28,111	4.1	58.4
Missouri	18,514	27,439	28,221	2.8	52.4

Source: US Bureau of Economic Analysis

While the majority of the population in Greene County reported income above \$20,000, 26.7% of the residents were below \$20,000. Table 2.2 compares Greene County with Missouri, and indicates that the county has higher percentages of the population with incomes between \$10,000 and \$50,000.

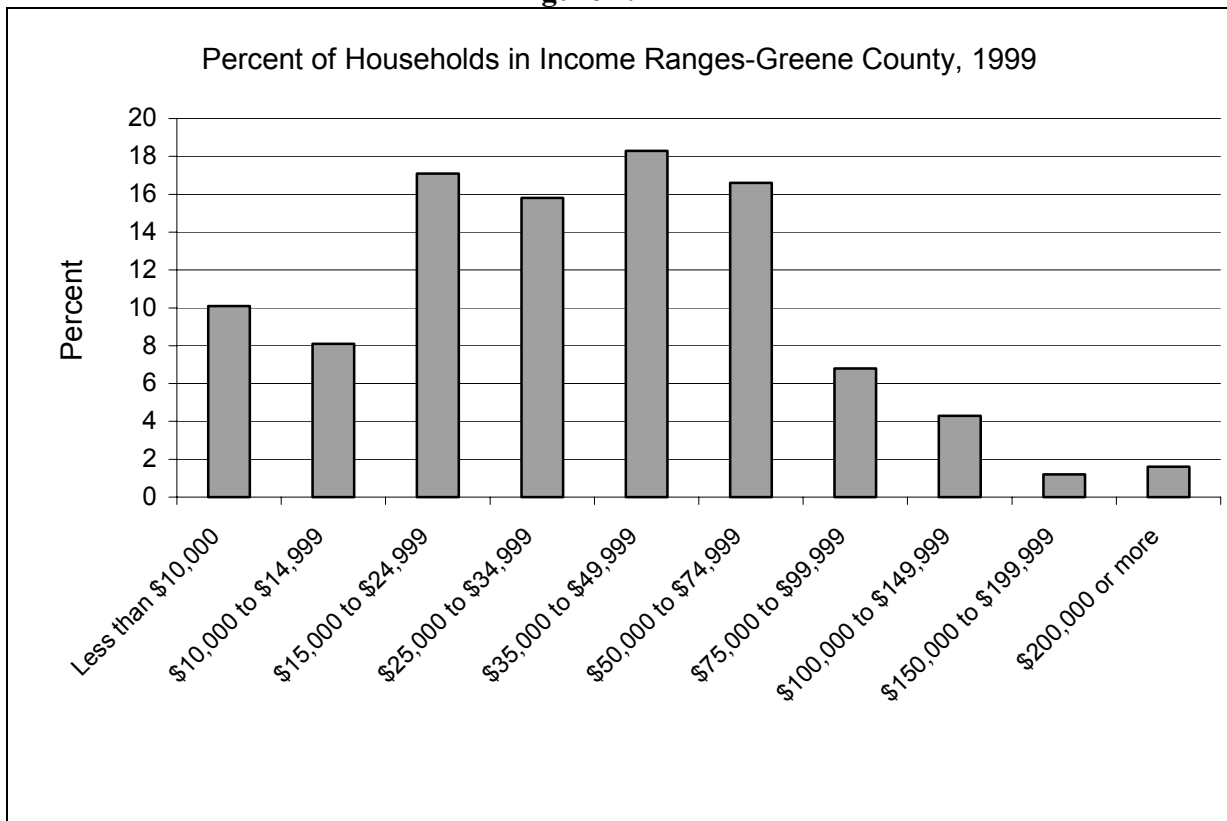
Table 2.2

Percent of Population in Income Ranges-Greene County and Missouri, 1999					
	Less Than \$10,000	\$10,000 to 14,999	\$15,000 to 19,999	\$20,000 to 49,999	\$50,000 or More
Greene	10.1	8.1	8.5	42.7	30.6
Missouri	10.1	7.0	7.1	39.3	36.5

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000

The information in Figures 2.1 and 2.2 illustrates the distribution of income for Greene County for households and families. Household income represents total income for members of a household regardless of relationship, whereas family income is based on familial relationships. Both measures indicate that a significant majority of households and families have incomes below \$49,999.

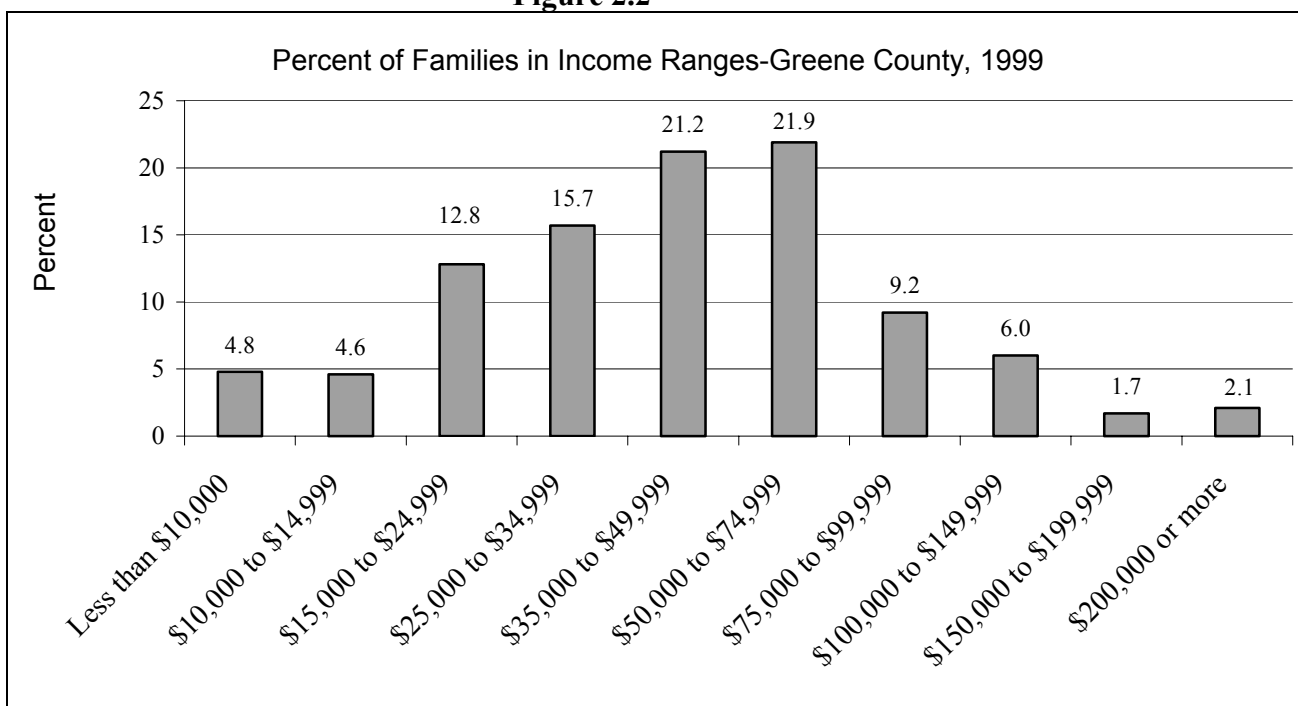
Figure 2.1



Source: US Census Bureau, 2000; n=98,003

The family incomes presented in Figure 2.2 are also important when considering poverty levels. The Federal poverty levels (Table 2.3) consider the number of children in relation to income. Thus, a family unit of 5 with an income of \$19,000 is below the poverty level while a family of 3 is not. This should be taken into account when examining this data. Also, because of the classification used by the Bureau of the Census, the number of families is less than the total number of households. This results in the percentages of poverty within income groups vary.

Figure 2.2



Source: US Census Bureau, 2000; n=62,147

The Federal poverty guidelines are used to define poverty status for families based on family size. These guidelines (Table 2.3) are used to determine the poverty status for families by government agencies.

Table 2.3

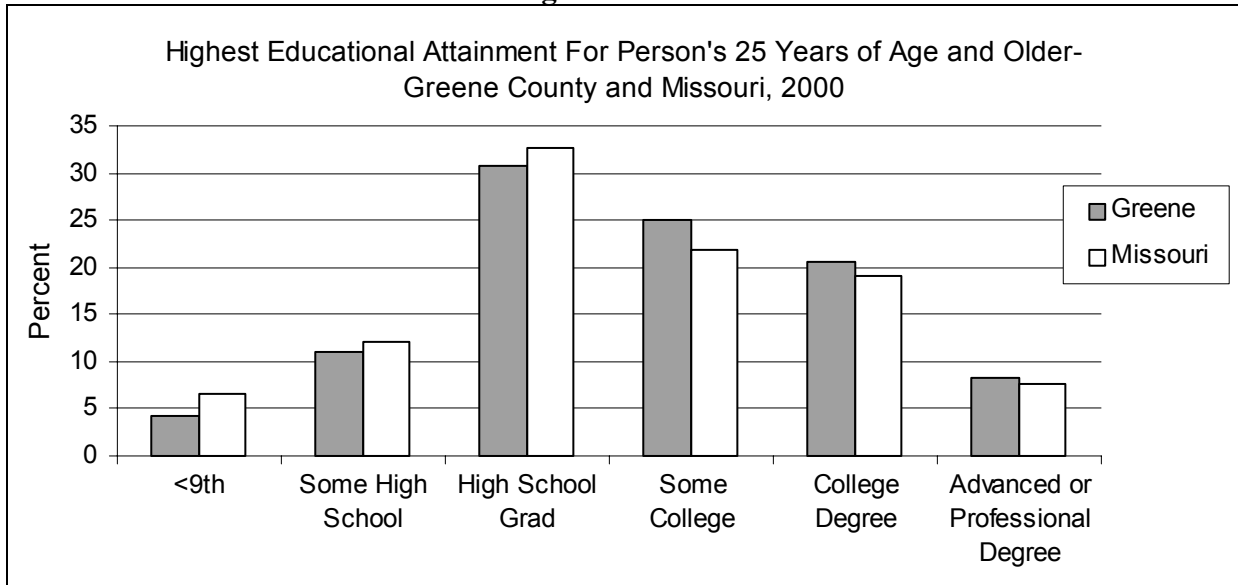
Federal Poverty Guidelines		
Size of Family Unit	Poverty Guideline (\$)	
	Year 2000	Year 2002
1	8,350	8,860
2	11,250	11,940
3	14,150	15,020
4	17,050	18,100
5	19,950	21,180
6	22,850	24,260
7	25,750	27,340
8	28,650	30,420
Each Additional Person Add:	\$2,900	\$3,080

Source: Federal Register

Education and Poverty

Level of educational attainment and poverty both correlate with health status. The educational attainment for Greene County is displayed in Figures 2.3 and 2.4. Education attainment for persons 25 years of age and older is higher in Greene County than in Missouri.

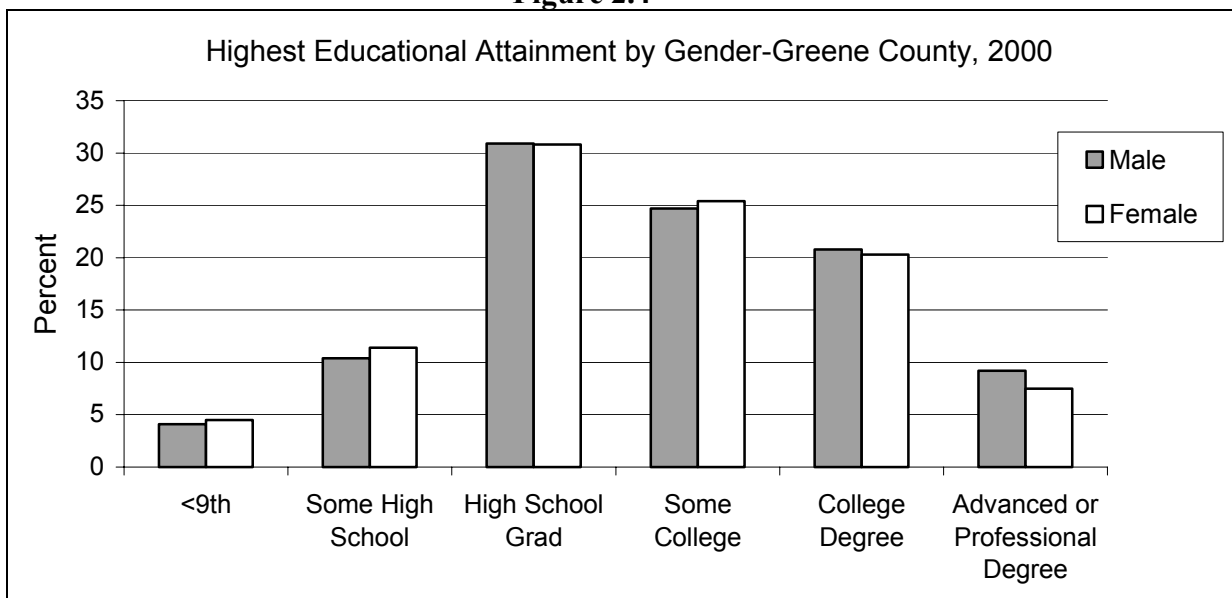
Figure 2.3



Source: US Census Bureau, 2000

The highest educational attainment by gender is presented in Figure 2.4. Both males and females have comparable levels of educational attainment with slightly more males reporting that they have an advanced degree.

Figure 2.4



Source: US Census Bureau, 2000

Females represented 44.9% of the workforce in Greene County and in Missouri (Table 2.4). The Greene County percent of females between 60 to 70 years of age working (32.0%) is higher than the state average.

Table 2.4

Percent of Women in the Labor Force-Greene County and Missouri, 2000					
	As a Percent of the Total Labor Force*		Percent of Females Over Age 16 Employed**		Percent of Females 60 to 70 Years of Age Employed
	1990	2000	1990	2000	2000
Greene	44.1	44.9	54.1	57.1	32.0
Missouri	43.4	44.9	54.9	56.0	30.5

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000

*n=number of persons in labor force; **n=number of females in population

Table 2.5 presents the percentage of individuals under the age of 18 and those over the age of 65 below poverty levels according to their reported 1989 and 1999 income. The number of individuals living below poverty decreased during the 1990s in Greene County and Missouri, particularly among the older population.

Table 2.5

Percent of Persons Below Poverty Level by Age-Greene County and Missouri, 1989 and 1999				
	Population Under Age 18		Population Over 65	
	1989	1999	1989	1999
Greene	15.4	13.7	12.1	7.1
Missouri	17.1	15.5	13.8	9.3

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000

In Table 2.6 the number of female householders below poverty with children is examined. The percent of female householders without a husband present who are living in poverty is 25%. The percentage of single mothers with children living in poverty is 37%.

Table 2.6

Female Headed Households Below Poverty Level-Greene County, 2000			
	Total	Number Living in Poverty	Percent Living in Poverty
Female Householders	9,651	2,429	25%
Female-Headed Family Households With Related Children Under 18	5,887	2,161	37%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

*Represents number of families in which poverty status was determined

Of all families in Greene County, 7.6% were living at or below poverty levels in 2000.

Table 2.7

Families Below Poverty-Greene County, 2000		
Total Families	Families Below Poverty	Percent of Families Below Poverty
62,147	4,716	7.6%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000

Table 2.8 identifies the population numbers in households with reported incomes at certain ratios of the poverty guidelines. A substantial portion of the population, 153,953 residents, was living in households with incomes at or above two times the federal poverty levels. Unfortunately 10,976 residents were living in households with incomes that were less than half the poverty level, and 27,630 or 12.1% of the population is living below the poverty level (100% Federal Poverty Level).

Table 2.8

Ratio of Income to Poverty Level-Greene County, 2000			
Ratio of Poverty Levels	Greene County	Percent of Population	Cumulative Frequencies
Under .50	10,976	4.8	4.8
.50 to .74	7,546	3.3	8.1
.75 to .99	9,108	4.0	12.1
1.00 to 1.24	10,321	4.5	16.6
1.25 to 1.49	12,860	5.6	22.2
1.50 to 1.74	12,329	5.4	27.6
1.75 to 1.84	5,238	2.3	29.9
1.85 to 1.99	6,511	2.8	32.7
2.00 and over	153,953	67.3	100.0
Total:	228,842	100	

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000

The different age groups in the county with incomes below 185% of the Federal Poverty Levels (FPL) are listed in Table 2.9. This is significant because federal and state programs use this income level to determine the eligibility of families with children for programs such as: WIC, Medicaid, and assistance for pregnant women.

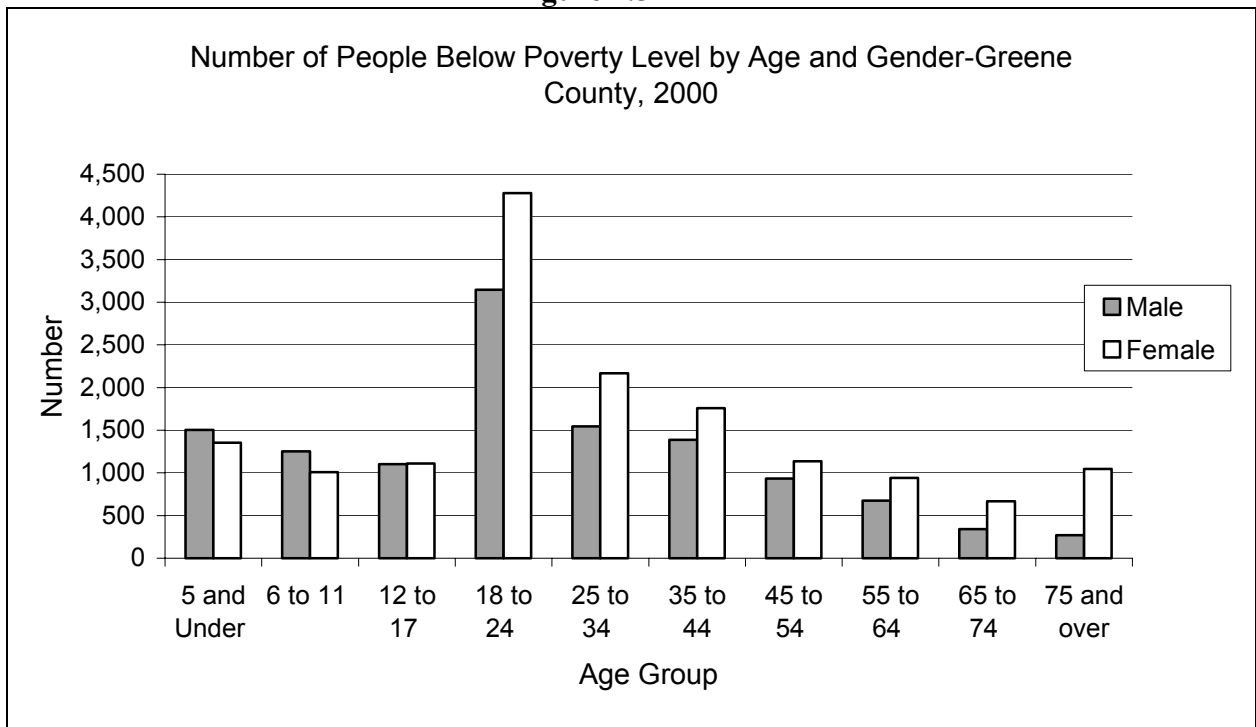
Table 2.9

Population Under 185% of FPL-Greene County, 2000		
	Number	Percent of Age Group
Under 5 years:	6,305	44.1
Under 18	19,135	48.5
18-24	12,976	49.0
25-34	10,382	32.3
35-54	13,372	20.0
55-64	3,883	24.0
65 and Over	8,023	26.0

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000

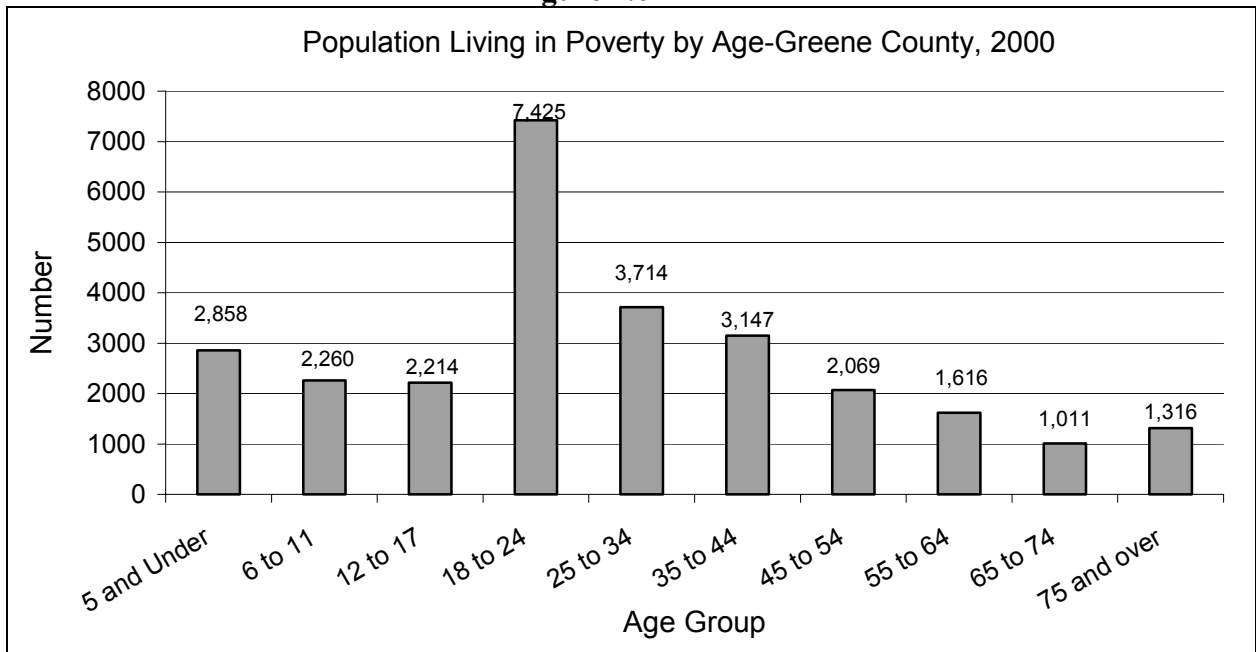
Figures 2.5 and 2.6 illustrate the distribution of those in poverty by age and gender. Two groups that may have special needs identified in this chart are those under 18 and elderly females.

Figure 2.5



Source: US Census Bureau, 2000; n=27,630

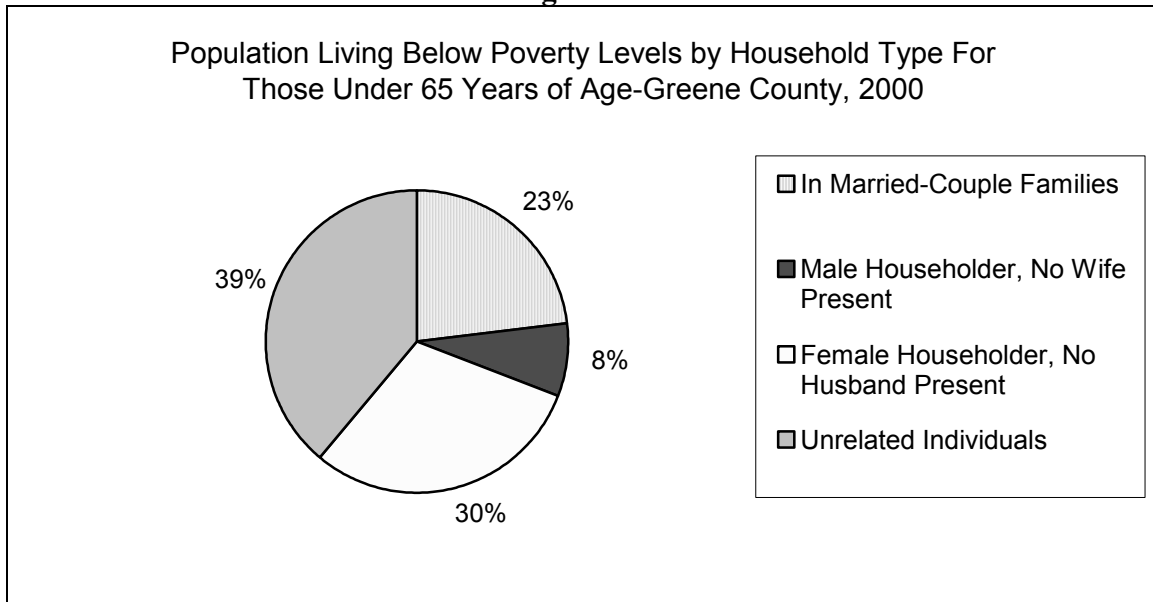
Figure 2.6



Source: US Census Bureau, 2000; n=27,630

The percentage of female-headed households in poverty was 30% of the total for those under 65 years of age (Figure 2.7). Households with unrelated individuals represented the largest percentage with 39%, while 23% of married couples had incomes below poverty levels.

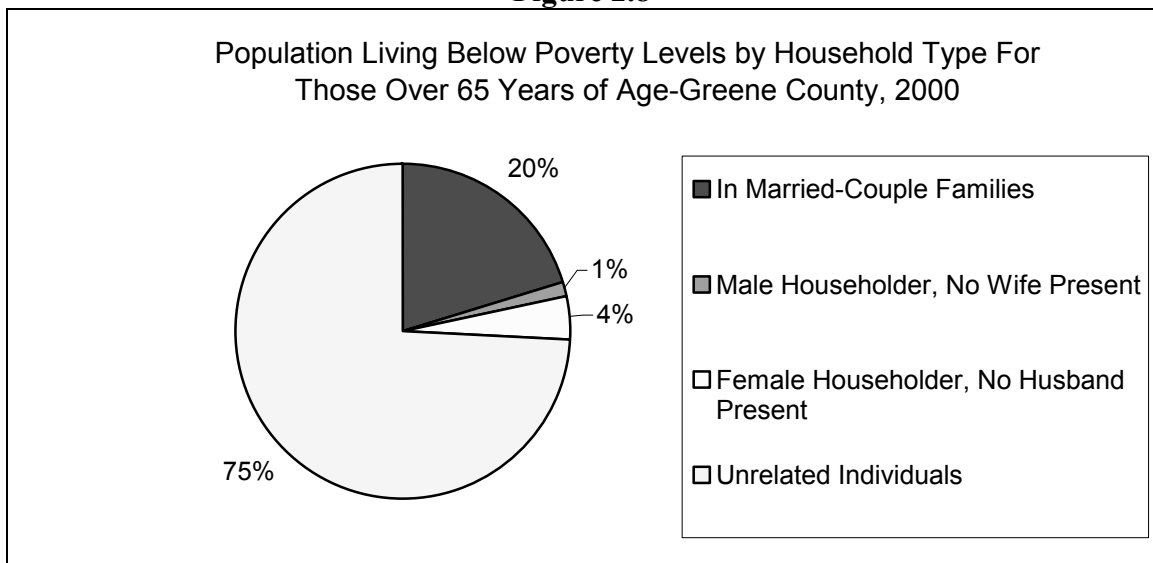
Figure 2.7



Source: US Census Bureau, 2000; n=25,303

Figure 2.8 identifies poverty for those over 65 years of age, with the highest percentage among households consisting of unrelated individuals. This may indicate a strategy that the older population is using to cope with living expenses.

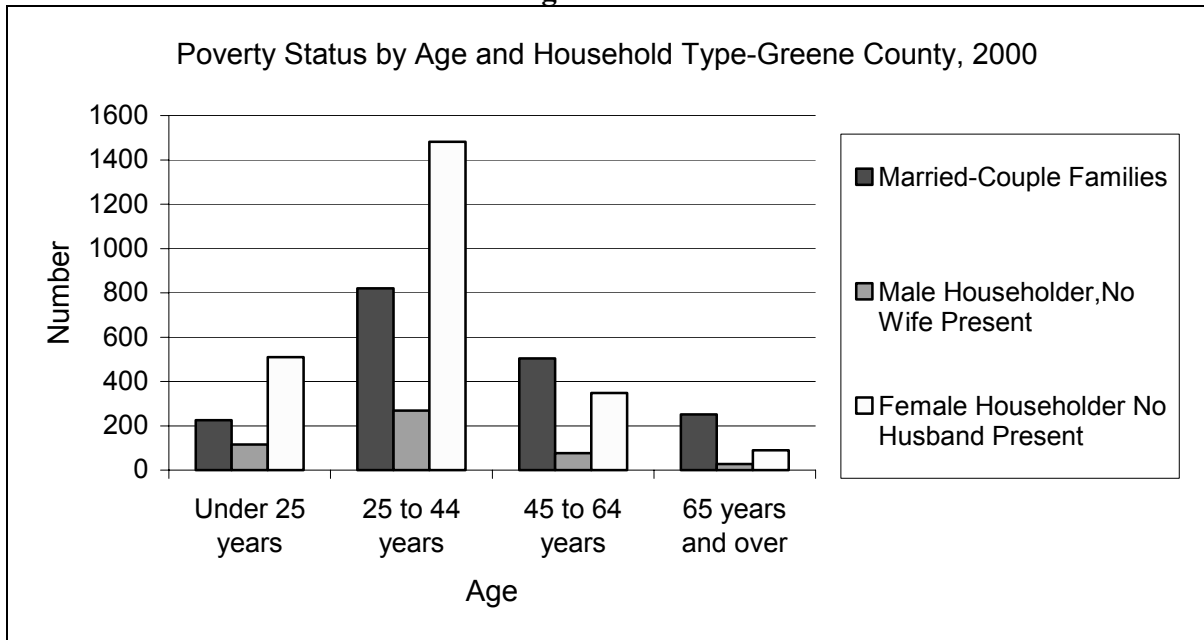
Figure 2.8



Source: US Census Bureau, 2000; n=2,327

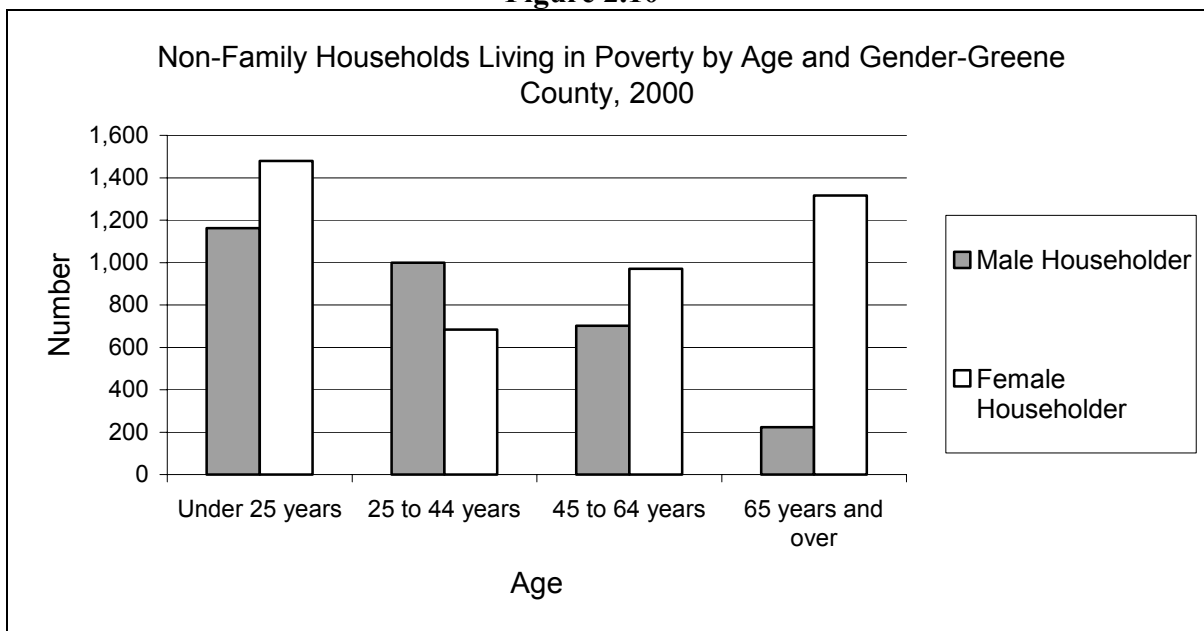
Poverty among specific household types and age groups is illustrated in the following figures. Female householders without a husband present were more likely to have incomes below poverty, compared to male householders without a wife present (Figure 2.9). This was consistent across all age groups.

Figure 2.9



Source: US Census Bureau, 2000

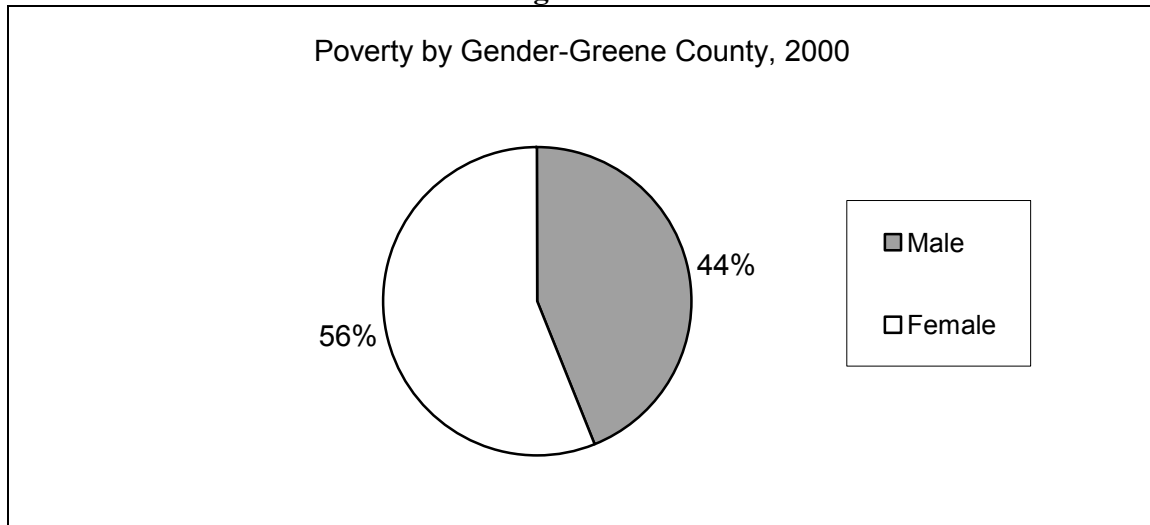
Figure 2.10



Source: US Census Bureau, 2000

Poverty in non-family households also indicated that more female householders were living in poverty than male householders (Figure 2.10). When considering the entire population in poverty, females in Greene County represented 56% of those in poverty (Figure 2.11).

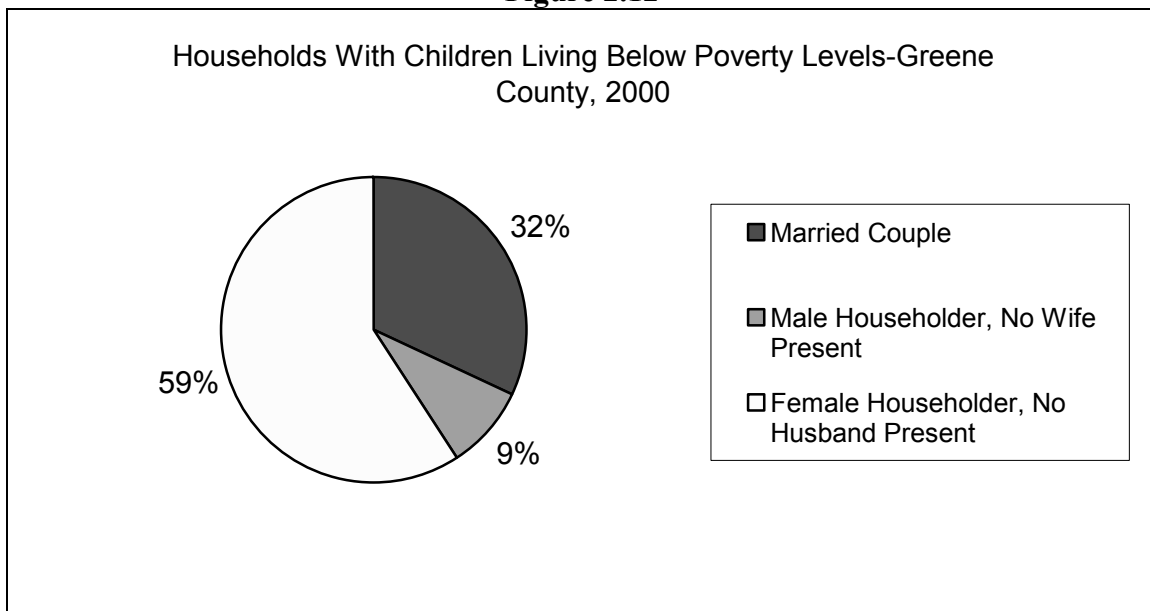
Figure 2.11



Source: US Census Bureau, 2000; n=27,630

The percentage of children in poverty by household type is illustrated in Figure 2.12. Of the children in poverty, 59% were in female-headed households, whereas male-headed households with children without a wife present accounted for only 9% of the children in poverty. This disparity may be due to a number of factors including the traditional income disparity between males and females, as well as the increased likelihood of children being placed with the mother when couples separate or divorce.

Figure 2.12

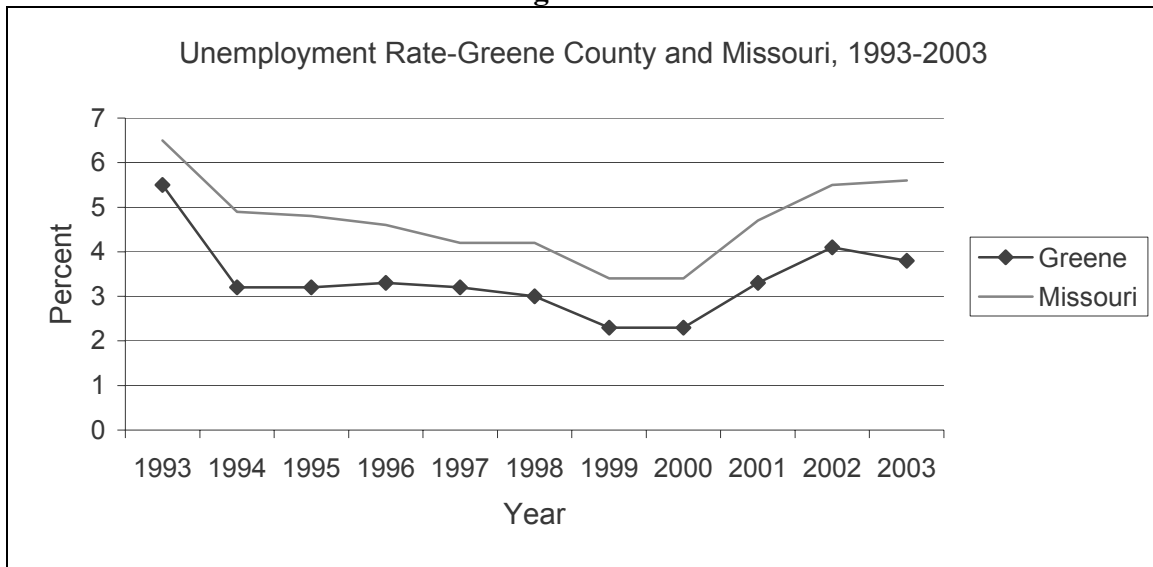


Source: US Census Bureau, 2000; n=7,054

Unemployment

The unemployment rate for Greene County has traditionally been lower than the state's rate. Figure 2.13 compares the state and county unemployment rates. Greene County's unemployment rate of 4% for 2002 was the highest it has been since 1993 (Figure 2.13). For 2002 and 2003, the state's unemployment rate was more than 1% higher than Greene County's.

Figure 2.13



Source: US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistic

Table 2.10

Disability and Employment Status-Greene County, 2000		
	Total	Percentage of Total Workforce
Total Workforce Population 16 to 64	221,986	100.0
With a Disability:	40,876	18.4
Disabled Employed	14,296	6.4
Disabled Not Employed	11,649	5.2
Without Disability:	181,110	81.6
Employed	102,678	46.3
Not Employed	29,844	13.4

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000

Disabled employed workers represented 6.4% of the population 16 to 64 years of age in Greene County, or 14,296 residents in 2000. Table 2.10 also identifies 13.4% of the population without a disability, or 29,844 residents, in Greene County as not employed.

Special Housing Characteristics

Tables 2.11 and 2.12 identify the number of plumbing and kitchen facilities in households as reported by the year 2000 census. Within Greene County, 490 residences lacked complete plumbing facilities and 835 lacked complete kitchen facilities.

Table 2.11

Plumbing Facilities by Household-Greene County, 2000	
Total Households	104,517
Households With Complete Plumbing Facilities	104,027
Households Lacking Complete Plumbing Facilities	490

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000

Table 2.12

Kitchen Facilities by Household-Greene County, 2000	
Total Households	104,517
Households With Complete Kitchen Facilities	103,682
Households Lacking Complete Kitchen Facilities	835

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000

Negative health consequences could result from either of these circumstances. For instance, insufficient kitchen facilities could result in food-borne illness. Likewise, the lack of plumbing facilities could result in poor hygiene practices, which could contribute to the spread of disease.

Commuting Characteristics

The socioeconomic situations in surrounding counties also affect Greene County, as indicated by identified commuting patterns. Table 2.13 lists the percent of workers that reported working outside their county of residence from 1970 to 2000. Greene County had the lowest percentage of workers who commuted outside of their county of residence compared to surrounding counties.

The actual number of workers who commuted to Greene County in 2000 is listed in table 2.13, as reported by the 2000 US Census. Most of these commuters were from Christian and Webster Counties. Consequently, the number of people in Greene County increases substantially as a result of the daily commute.

Table 2.13

Commuting Patterns For Greene County and Bordering Counties, 1970-2000					
Percent of Workers, Working Outside of County of Residence*					
	1970	1980	1990	2000	Number Working in Greene County, 2000
Christian	43.7	55.7	59.2	64.3	15,188
Dade	20.4	27.3	38.9	43.5	763
Dallas	34.7	30.9	43.9	53.2	1,846
Greene	3.5	4.0	6.1	7.0	
Lawrence	23.3	30.2	39.9	47.0	2,575
Polk	18.5	28.5	29.9	37.5	3,499
Webster	32.1	34.0	48.6	55.5	6,287
Other Counties (Barry, Douglas, Hickory, Laclede, Stone, Taney, Wright, Barton, Camden, Cedar, Howell, Newton, Oregon, Ozark, St. Clair, Shannon, Texas)					5,719
Total					35,877

Source: Missouri Census Data Center; U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

*Includes all workers who reported commuting to a county outside of their resident county

The significance of the daily influx of commuters to Greene County is becoming increasingly important. As these residents enter and leave the county, the population increases and decreases substantially. This poses many potential challenges for Greene County officials and those of surrounding counties. Potential challenges include: disease surveillance, emergency response, environmental impact/pollution, and traffic/transportation issues. Consequently, as the population in the region continues to increase, more cooperation between counties will be necessary to avoid problems that easily move across jurisdictional boundaries.

For More Information, Please Refer to These Works Cited and Consulted

Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services.

Website: <http://www.dhss.state.mo.us>

Missouri Office of Social and Economic Data Analysis, OSEDA.

Website: <http://www.oseda.missouri.edu/>

U.S. Census Bureau, US Department of Commerce. Summary File 1, 100 Percent Data. Census 2000.

Website: <http://www.census.gov>

U.S. Census Bureau, US Department of Commerce. Summary File 3, 100 Percent Data. Census 2000.

Website: <http://www.census.gov>

“The art of living is more like wrestling than dancing.”

Marcus Aurelius